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Office Hours: TR 11:30-12:30;
W 1:30-2:30 or by appointment

Overview

The primary goals of this course are to introduce you to the concepts and tools involved in public policy analysis and to develop an appreciation for the complexity of the policy process in the real world. In doing so, it will provide insight into the central questions addressed by the discipline of policy analysis, namely: *How do we decide whether any given policy is a good policy, an efficient policy, an equitable policy, or a policy that we want? Why do some policies work while others fail? How do we choose amongst policy alternatives? How and why does something come to be seen as a public problem that requires government action? What factors influence the outcomes of the policy making process? Who decides public policy priorities? How can we measure social costs and benefits of public policy?*

In our classroom study of public policy, we will draw extensively on literature from both political science and economics. In addition to exploring the policy-making process – and the roles played by key actors, institutions, and the media – we will consider the way markets and microeconomic principles are employed to analyze policy. The major criticisms that have been waged against economic theories of policy analysis will be considered, as well as the alternative criteria one might consider when evaluating public policy. Lectures that focus exclusively on theory will generally be followed by classes that deal with specific policy issues and debates. As a result, this course will require you to critically analyze several major domestic policy issues. The goal of policy case studies and the related assignments is to promote the development of your analytic and writing skills.

In the service learning portion of the course, students will work closely with community partners from the nonprofit arena. Approximately 7 hours per week will be spent at the nonprofit, contributing to the research and development of public policy. This hands-on experience will provide a rare glimpse into the practical challenges of policymaking, and will empower students to become critical consumers and producers of policy scholarship.

Course Objectives

- To examine the defining characteristics of the US policy process.
- To demonstrate an understanding of the way that public policy is shaped by a diverse array of competing interests and actors.
- To analyze the variety of criteria available for evaluating public policies.
- To identify the inherent tradeoffs found in public policy alternatives, for example: efficiency versus equality, public goods versus private goods, externality costs versus regulation costs.
- To gain a substantive understanding of several important policy issues currently facing the United States.
- To gain experience in applying the tools of policy analysis to a select number of contemporary policy issues.
- To develop objective arguments on all sides of an issue and to recognize the legitimacy of different points of view.
- To recognize deeper ideological and philosophical questions stimulated by public policy debates.

Learning Objectives:

- The development of critical thinking skills
- The development of collaboration and discussion skills

- The development of research skills
- The development of writing skills, especially pertaining to research
- **Class Participation [20%].** Class participation will take on two forms. First, you are expected to come prepared to class – having completed all assigned reading – and to actively participate in class discussions. Second, you will contribute to an online discussion forum [Blackboard]. The topic of the forum will be announced on Blackboard on Monday morning, and you must respond by Thursday at 5pm. The arguments and questions raised in this forum may be further discussed in class.
- **Offsite Participation [15%].** Students will be expected to spend between 7-10 hours offsite doing work with the community partner, San Joaquin Community Partnership for Families (CPF). Students will be introduced to the CPF on the first day of class and will sign-up for project assignments. Students will submit weekly progress reports to me via Blackboard containing number of hours worked, tasks in progress/completed, and journal entries. Prompts for journal entries will be distributed the first week of class.
- **Op-Ed Essay [10%].** Write an essay of at least 1000 words that identifies and describes a particular policy problem. Propose a specific action to be taken by a specific party. Criteria for this essay will be discussed in class.
- **Exam [30%].** One exam will be given in class, toward the end of the semester.
- **Term Paper [20%].** This 10-12 page paper will focus on a policy debate other than what you wrote about in the op-ed assignment. It will entail an in depth analysis of a particular policy area pertaining to the community partner and is expected to incorporate the tools and concepts highlighted in the class. Specific guidelines will be distributed in class in February.
- **Research Presentation [5%].** Students will give an oral presentation that reviews the analysis from their term papers.

Class Policies

- **Academic Misconduct:** Any student who is caught cheating or plagiarizing (as defined by Tiger Lore) will receive a zero for the assignment, likely fail the course, and will be reported to the Judiciary Committee.
- **Late Papers and Assignments:** All work is due at the beginning of the class period for which it is assigned. Late papers and assignments will be docked a full letter grade for each day they are late. Papers and assignments more than 4 days late will not be accepted under any circumstances.
- **Incompletes:** Incompletes will not be granted without prior approval from the instructor.
- **Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory. Habitual lateness or early departure will count as absence.

Disability Statement

If you are a student who requires special accommodations for examinations or other needs based on a documented disability, please see me within the first week of class to discuss options.

Required Readings (Available from the University Bookstore)

- Munger, Michael. *Analyzing Policy: Choices, Conflicts, and Practice*.
- Kingdon, John. *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policy*.
- Online Course Reserve (**CR**) readings available through Blackboard and online JSTOR readings (**J**) available through the electronic databases link on the library website

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments [Subject to Change]

*****CR= Online Course Reserve Readings on Blackboard*****

*****J=JSTOR online database through library website*****

Introduction to the Study and Practice of Public Policy

Tuesday, January 15

- Course Overview: Syllabi and Pre-Course Assessment Distributed.
- Guest Speakers from the San Joaquin Community Partnership for Families.

Thursday, January 17

- Shafritz et al., 1-22; Theodoulou and Cahn: p15-25; 34-37 (CR)
- Check Blackboard for your first short assignment. It will be related to this week's readings. Completion of the assignment will count as both attendance and your participation grade.

Problem Formulation: When Does an Idea's Time Come?

Tuesday, January 22:

- Munger: Chapter 1 (skim mathematical equations for understanding); Chapter 2
- Kingdon: Chapter 5

Economic Approaches to the Study of Public Policy

Thursday, January 24: Markets as a Benchmark and Principals of Markets

- Munger: Chapter 3
- Munger: Chapter 4 (p101-108, p112-113)
- Munger: Chapter 7 (p200-205, p212-224)

Tuesday, January 29: Public Policy and Federalism

- Dye, Thomas R. 2008. "American Federalism: Institutional Arrangements and Public Policy." *Understanding Public Policy*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson – Prentice Hall. (CR)
- Smith, Kevin B. *State and Local Government*. Excerpts. (CR)

Thursday, January 31: Minimum Wage

- Hayes, Michael T. 2007. "Policy Characteristics, Patterns of Policies, and the Minimum Wage: Toward a Typology of Redistributive Policies." *The Policy Studies Journal*. 35(3). (J)
- Tanner, Jane. 2002, September 27. The Living Wage Movement. *The CQ Researcher* (CR)
- Deere, Donald et al. 2002. Sense and Nonsense on the Minimum Wage. *Regulation*, 18, 1. (CR)
- Neumark, David. 2004. Living Wages: Protection For or Protection From Low-Wage Workers? *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*. Vol. 58, No. 1. 27-51. (J)

Tuesday, February 5: "Sin" Taxes

- Tauras, John A. 2003. "Public Policy and Smoking Cessation Among Young Adults in the United States." *Health Policy*. (CR)
- Farrelly, Matthew C. et al. 2003. "State Cigarette Excise Taxes: Implications for Revenue and Tax Evasion." http://www.rti.org/pubs/8742_Excise_Taxes_FR_5-03.pdf
- Weimer, David and Aiden Vining. 2005. An Illustration: Taxing Alcohol to Save Lives. *Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice*. (CR)

Thursday, February 7: The Environment

- Kraft, Michael E. 2007. "Environmental Problems and Politics." *Environmental Policy and Politics*. New York: Pearson Longman. (CR)
- Dye, Thomas R. 2005. Environmental Policies: Externalities and Interests. *Understanding Public Policy*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson – Prentice Hall. (CR)
- Barthold, Thomas A. 1996. Issues in the Design of Environmental Excise Taxes. From *Reading, Issues and Problems in Public Finance*, 4th Edition Chicago, IL: Irwin. (CR)

Tuesday, February 12: Anti-Trust Policy and Microsoft

- Crandall, Robert W. and Clifford Winston. 2003. "Does Antitrust Policy Improve Consumer Welfare?" *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*. 17(4). (CR)
- Etro, Frederico. "The Theory of Market Leaders, Antitrust Policy and the Microsoft Case." Working Paper Series. Department of Economics, University of Milan – Bicocca. (CR)
- 2001, November 10. An Unsettling Settlement *The Economist* (CR)

Thursday, February 14: Market-Based Education Reforms/ Market Failures

- Lubienski, Christopher. 2003. "Innovation in Education Markets: Theory and Evidence on the Impact of Competition and Choice in Charter Schools." *American Educational Research Journal*. 40, 2. 395-443. (J)
- Munger: Chapter 4 (p113-127)
- Munger: Chapter 7 (p224-231)

This week's discussion question: Is education a "public good"? Is market-based education reform a way to overcome collective action problems?

Alternatives to the Notion of Market Efficiency

Tuesday, February 19: Processes of Incrementalism and the Garbage Can Model

- Theodoulou and Cahn: p113-127 (CR)
- Kingdon: ch. 4

Thursday, February 21: Alternative Criteria and Political Constraints/ Interest Groups, Regulation, and Licensing

- Munger: Chapter 8
- Stigler, George. 1971. The Theory of Economic Regulation. *Bell Journal of Economics*. (p3-13) (CR)
- Friedman, Milton. 1962. *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p136-149 (CR)

Tuesday, February 26: Markets, Politics, and Expert/ Affirmative Action Tax Policy/ Immigration/ Drug Policy

- Munger: Chapter 5
- Williams, Walter. Affirmative Action Can't Be Mended. *The Cato Journal*, 17, 1. (CR)
- Fryer, Roland G. and Glenn C. Loury. 2007. "Valuing Identity: The Simple Economics of Affirmative Action Policies." (CR)
- Hall, Robert E and Alvin Rabbushka. 1985. Meet the Federal Income Tax. *The Flat Tax*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press. (CR)
- Shapiro, Robert. 1996. Why Fairness Matters: Progressive Versus Flat Taxes. From the Progressive Policy Institute. (CR)
- Dye, Thomas R. 2008. "International Trade and Immigration: Elite-Mass Conflict." *Understanding Public Policy*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson – Prentice Hall. (CR)

Participants in the Policy-Making Process

Thursday, February 28: SPECIAL GUEST – Prof. Morris P. Fiorina, Stanford University, Hoover Institution
Congress and the President/ Agenda Setting –

- Theodoulou and Cahn: p96-104; p201-236 (CR)
- Kingdon: p21-30; 34-44
- Birkland, Thomas. 2001. *An Introduction to the Policy Process*. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe. Chapter 5 (CR)

Tuesday, March 4: Bureaucracy and Regulation

- Theodoulou and Cahn: p251-76 (CR)
- Kingdon: p30-34
- Skrzycki, Cindy. 2003. *The Regulators*. New York: Roman and Littlefield: p7-50. (CR)

Review

- Review of major themes and concepts from the first half of the class.
- Students are encouraged to bring questions to class.

Thursday, March 6: Service-Learning Reflection Day

Spring Break: No Classes Tuesday, March 11 and Thursday, March 13 (Think about the topic for your Op-Ed essay.)

Tuesday, March 18: Courts and Other Legal Actors: Reproductive Rights/ Tobacco

- Theodoulou and Cahn: p288-95 (CR)
- Rosenberg, Gerald N. 1993. Transforming Women's Lives: The Courts and Abortion. *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (CR)
- Derthick, Martha. 2002. Excerpt from *Up in Smoke: From Legislation to Litigation in Tobacco Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. (CR)

Thursday, March 20: Media and Interest Groups

- Theodoulou and Cahn: p295-311, p317-323 (CR)
- Kingdon: p45-70

Policy Implementation

Tuesday, March 27: Homeland Security

- Wilson, James Q. 1991. *Turf. Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*. New York: Basic Books (CR)
- Dye, Thomas R. 2008. "Homeland Security: Terrorism and Nondeterrable Threats." *Understanding Public Policy*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson – Prentice Hall. (CR)

Thursday, April 1: Policy Design and Goals/ Bureaucratic Behavior

- Birkland, Thomas. 2001. *An Introduction to the Policy Process*. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe. Chapter 7 and half of Chapter 8 (CR)
- Dye, Thomas. 2001. *The Policy Implementation Process. Top Down Policymaking*. New York: Chatham House Publishers. (CR)
- Theodoulou and Cahn: 140-152 (CR)
- ***** OP-ED TOPICS DUE TODAY *****

NO CLASS APRIL 3: Conference

Policy Evaluation

Tuesday, April 8: Probability and Decision Analysis/ Discounting and Present Value

- Munger, Chapter 9
- Munger, Chapter 10 (p322-337, 342-346)

Thur April 10: Policy Evaluation Part I

- Munger, selections from Chapter 11
- Dye, Thomas R. 2008. "Policy Evaluation: Finding Out What Happens after a Law is Passed." *Understanding Public Policy*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson – Prentice Hall. (CR)
- *****OP-ED PIECE DUE TODAY*****

Tue, April 15: Policy Evaluation Part II

- *Cases in Public Policy Analysis*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. Chapter 6. (CR)
- [Cost Benefit Case Study0001.pdf](#)
- Skrzycki, Cindy. 2003. *The Regulators*. New York: Roman and Littlefield. Chapter 5. (CR)
- [Skrzycki - Price Tag of Regulation.pdf](#)

NO CLASS APRIL 17: Conference

Tuesday, April 22: Individual Meetings with Prof. Sylvester in her office

Thursday, April 24: Exam

Tuesday, April 29: Oral Presentations

Thursday, May 1: Oral Presentations

*Tuesday, May 6: **LAST DAY OF CLASS***

- Post-Course Assessment
- Oral Presentations

Thursday, May 8

- *****Term Papers DUE TODAY*****